

Testimony of Ryan Attar a Naturopathic Medical Student at the University of Bridgeport presented before the Public Health Committee Supporting Prescriptive Authority for Naturopathic Medicine Physicians in H.B. No. 5534 (RAISED): AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHY.

March 7, 2016

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Ryan Attar, I'm a 3rd year Naturopathic Medical Student at the University of Bridgeport. Prior to starting my studies in Bridgeport I served in the US Army where I advanced to the rank of Captain. I was born and raised in Bristol, CT. My family now lives in Berlin CT.

Like far too many of my fellow veterans, I developed a serious chronic disease while I was serving. This forced me to be medically discharged from the military after 6 years of service.

I recently had a 10 year reunion with the unit of whom I was deployed to Iraq. Nearly everyone I reunited with had some type of chronic illness; whether it be psoriasis, irritable bowel syndrome, migraines or chronic pain. In my case, my immune system went after the beta cells in my pancreas and gave me the autoimmune form of diabetes. Two other soldiers I served with also developed this condition, which is normally rare and occurs in younger individuals.

After I got out of the army, I saw several doctors. And being a very disciplined person, I followed their instructions perfectly. My condition, however, was not under control. I had erratic blood sugar, and my A1c (a measure of long term blood sugar control) was quite high. Taking all my prescribed medications seemed to stabilize me, but didn't return me to the normalcy I'd had before my diagnosis. I eventually visited a naturopathic doctor and was amazed that he took the time (over an hour per visit) to talk to me and go over the ins and outs of my diet and lifestyle. This was the first physician I'd ever encountered who was profoundly knowledgeable regarding nutrition; a trait quintessential for counseling someone with diabetes and other chronic conditions. Through his guidance, I was able to reduce my insulin dose to ¼ of what I'd previously taken, returning my blood sugars into the non-diabetic range.

After my experience with this physician I decided to change my career path. I had been working for my family business after the Army and quit and decided to start naturopathic medical school. My goal is to specialize in Veterans Health, targeting the chronic diseases so many of us suffer from; the same diseases that cripple our healthcare system. We already see many veterans in our UB Clinics, who choose to come in for naturopathic care over the local VA hospital in West Haven. There is so much we can do for them, and I am excited to begin practicing so I can do my part.

I would love to stay here in my home state of CT. I graduate next year and look forward to opening up my practice. A major roadblock that would keep me from staying here, and instead setting up a practice in say a place like VT, NH, Arizona or any west coast state, would be my inability to prescribe and manage my patients medications, like the insulin hormone I inject every day. We are trained to know how to use of pharmaceuticals and pharmacology is a core component of our curriculum. We are well-steeped in biochemistry and possess a uniquely keen awareness of natural hormone regulation in the body. Armed with this knowledge, we treat chronic disease from its root, eradicating its source and freeing the patient from permanent dependence on pharmaceuticals. However, prescription authority is vital in many cases.

Thank you all for your time. I ask you to please vote in favor of Naturopathic Physicians in CT to have the same prescriptive rights as many other states. I would be happy to speak with any of you afterward about my profession, my school, or my medical history and success.

Sincerely,
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